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ABSTRACT

This paper has 2 parts: (1) an overview of the history and chronology of Chicano literature; and (2) a review of bibliographies of Chicano literature. Chicano literature can be divided into pre-Chicano literature (1535-1959) and contemporary Chicano literature (1959 to the present). Colonial literature is that written between 1542 and the Mexican declaration of independence from Spain in 1810--this literature includes "relaciones," that is, accounts of explorations, histories, dramas, poetry, and writings of a religious nature. Luis Leal, the dean of Chicano studies, designates the period of breaking away from Spain (1810) and the United States takeover (1848) as that of moving "toward literary autonomy." Up to the 1950s, Chicano literature remained an "in-house" phenomenon, ignored by the mainstream. The 1960s was a period of uprising, described by Francisco Lomeli as the "breaking of social barriers." A major group of writers in the late 1970s became known as "the isolated generation of 1975"--characterized by their moving in disparate and innovative ways. The impact of academe, academics, and a more sophisticated audience dominate the field of Chicano literature today, setting the stage for a new internationalism and a postmodern sense of questioning human truth and values. Contains 23 notes and 86 references. (TB)

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Panelist: Prof. César A. González-T., San Diego Mesa College
Bibliography by González-T. and Prof. José Salgado, San Diego City College.

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Chicano Literature: Expanding the Base of American Literature, Bibliography and Resources

Those of us who trace our genealogical roots back to Mexico, and who are creating a new synthesis out of our experience of the Mexican and the North American cultures in the United States call ourselves Chicanos and Chicanas. In this creative act of self-naming, there is embedded a splendid archetypal antinomy that adumbrates the intuitive humanistic sense that we had of ourselves as members of the *world* community. We sense, however, that we are still somehow "strangers in our own land" (Pablo de la Guerra, qtd. in Leal, "Pre-Chicano" 71).

Chicana/Chicano is an auto-nomen derived from a *difrasismo*, a complex of two words, such as the Nahuas used. These two words make up the word *México (Méh-shee-co)*, [*Mexicano*, *Chicano*], as Jacques Soustelle, following the lead of Father Antonio del Rincón (1595),[1] reports:

> . . . *Metzli*, the moon, and *xictli*, the navel or centre. Mexico according to [the Nahauas], means "(the town) in the middle (of the lake) of the moon", Metzliapan, the lake of the moon, being the lagoon's former name. And this reading seems to be confirmed by the fact that the Mexicans' neighbors, the Otomí, called the city by the double name *anbondo amedetzâná*: now *bondo* is the Otomí for prickly-pear, and *amedetzâná* means "in the middle of the moon." (1-2)

The Nahuas considered themselves, as have other great civilizations, to be the belly button, the center of the world, whence life and learning flowed.

When they set out on their wanderings from Aztlán, in what ironically is today the Southwestern United States, they were "led by their powerful patron god, Huitzilopochtli" (Day 4). He ordered them to settle where they saw an eagle with a serpent in its beak, perched on a cactus. There in the middle of Lake Texcoco, they founded what is today the largest city in the world, Mexico City. The glyph for the city, the eagle and the serpent, represents life and death, being and nothingness, the extremes of human knowledge articulated by Parmenides and Heraclitus.

All of this we received from our Indian mother, along with the wealth of the Judaeo-Christian-Greco-Romano traditions of our Spanish father; still, we were told that we did not have a literature, that we did not have a history. As recently as 1986, Don Luis Leal, the founding senior scholar and truly the doyen of Chicano literary history and literary criticism,[2] wrote:

> As of today, very few historians and critics of American literature, ... [e]ven those who call themselves comparatists have paid attention to the presence of ethnic literatures. . . .

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> The difficulties encountered by minority writers with the so-called high critics extend to editors and editorial houses. ("Literary Criticism" 4-5)

And though Warner, Dutton, Norton, HarperCollins and a few other major publishing houses have begun to publish some Chicano titles, I still find very few critical articles on Chicano literature written by non-Chicanos, with the exception of the work of established European scholars such as Horst Tonn (U Duisburg), Heiner Bus (U Bamberg), Jean Cazemajou (U de Bordeaux), and more recently by Astrid M. Fellner (U of Vienna), Carmen Flys-Junquera (U de Alcalá de Henares, Madrid), Paul Beekman Taylor (U de Genève), and many others from as far away as India, China, and Siberia. We are still very much the step-child of American literature. Race mixture, poverty, and religion seem to make us problematic for the other.

Our literature, therefore, is a complex metaphor, creating bicultural images that reflect the synthesis of our experience with our Spanish father, our Indian mother, and our Anglo Saxon stepmother.[3] In this vein, a character in the late Arturo Islas' second novel, *Migrant Souls* says, "We are on the border between a land that has forgotten us and another land that does not understand us. . . . So what are we educated wetbacks and migrant souls to do?" (165).[4]

This is our North American experience. And our call to you here today for continuing to move toward a more inclusive North American literature takes on a greater relevance in this time of backlash and unprecedented political opportunism riding on the anti-affirmative action and anti-immigrant sentiment of some who are in denial of the demographic evolution of our nation and of a world in convergence.

My purpose this afternoon is to offer you alternatives, outlining the wealth and breadth of our Chicano literature and of our scholarly resources. I am confident that you will find something that will enrich your research and curricula by making these more inclusive of the always-been-there-but-just-now-emerging American Literature of the Twenty-First Century. My presentation will have two parts: First I will sketch an overview of the history and chronology of Chicano Literature; afterwards, I will distribute and review bibliographies that Prof. José Salgado and I have updated for this conference. Note will be made of the important UC Berkeley Chicano Database.

The overview of Chicano literature can be divided into Pre-Chicano Literature (1535-1959) and Contemporary Chicano Literature (1959-to the present), divisions that have been progressively developed by Leal and Francisco Lomelí,[5] most recently in the *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States: Literature and Art*, edited by Lomelí, a *sine que non* as an introduction to Chicano Literature, which I follow especially in the area of Pre-Chicano Literature. The structural outline of their suggested historical periods is as follows:

I. <u>History and Chronology</u>
  A. <u>Pre-Chicano Literature: Process and Meaning (1539-1959)</u>,
  Luis Leal

Pre-Chicano Literature
  Colonial Literature (1542-1810)
  Toward Literary Autonomy (1810-1848)
Territorial Literature (1848-1912)
Mexican-American Literature (1912-1959)

B. Contemporary Chicano Literature, 1959-1990: From Oblivion to Affirmation to the Forefront.
Francisco A. Lomelí.

The 1950s: A Crossroads of Reclaiming a Literary Past
The 1960s: Breaking Social Barriers
Cultural Nationalism as a Literary Impulse
The 1970s: Ideology Versus Craft
The Isolated Generation
The 1980s: From Diversification to Postmodernity

In reviewing the contemporary period, I will note some ideological and philosophical emphases that I believe are significant.

When and where, then, does Chicano literature begin? Similar questions arise with regard to when and where North American literature begins? Does it begin in 1585 in Roanoke, Virginia with the Lost Colony? In 1607 with Jamestown? On July 4, 1776 with the Declaration of Independence? And does literature written prior to 1776, form part of United States American literature, before there was a United States? Of course it does; it is the literature of the colonial antecedents of this country. Similar questions could be discussed concerning Mexican and other literatures with colonial and indigenous antecedents.

The same may be said of Chicano literature which properly begins in 1959 with the publication of José Antonio Villareal's novel *Pocho*, but whose antecedents are prior even to 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo brought to a successful close, what the American historian C. C. Cumberland describes as an imperialistic war of aggression. The Spanish colonial antecedents of Chicano literature stretch back to 1536 in what would later become Mexico; and, later still, the United States. Hence, in my Foreword to *The Anaya Reader*, I point out that "After the arrival of Europeans in the New World, the first literature written in North America, in what would later become the United States, was written in Spanish--before the Mayflower (1602) and before Jamestown (1606)" (xv).

For a beginning date of Spanish presence in the New World, relevant to our purposes, recall that Mexico City falls to Cortez in 1521. Already by 1536, the shipwrecked Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca is journeying across what would become the Southern United States. The publication in 1542 in Spain of his *Narración de los naufragios*, (Account of the Shipwrecks), opens the period of the colonial literature (Leal, "Pre-Chicano" 63).

In a paper presented in 1992, the noted scholar Juan Bruce-Novoa,[6] speculated that perhaps Cabeza de Vaca was the first Chicano. Reflecting on Bruce-Novoa's observation, Leal, in his essay on Pre-Chicano Literature, further underscores the substantive element in Cabeza de Vaca's experience that constitutes the warrant for his inclusion in North American Pre-Chicano Literature: "Bruce-Novoa," Leal writes,

> **justifies the inclusion of this cronista's work in Chicano literature because in his writings, ambiguity, the essence of *Chicanismo*, is already present. When Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain, he was no longer Spanish but Indian. And in Mexico, of course, he was not Mexican but Spanish. The Chicano undergoes this same phenomenon; in Mexico he is *pocho*[7] and in the United States he is not one hundred percent North American; Mexican-American at the most, which is to say, not totally North American. (64)**

Colonial Literature, then, is written between 1542 and the Mexican declaration of independence from Spain in 1810. This literature includes *relaciones*, that is accounts of explorations; histories, dramas, poetry, writings of a religious nature and others.

Leal designates the period of breaking away from Spain beginning on September 16 of 1810, and the U.S. take-over of 1848, as that of moving "Toward Literary Autonomy." The introduction of printing presses and journalism is important. Newspapers print prose, poetry, an occasional serial novel, and especially essays of protest. To this day, newspapers are a major source for our recovery of the canon.

It is here, Leal goes on to note, "that we find the origins of Chicano literature *per se*" (70). New elements are added that distinguish our writings from the Spanish colonial and the North American literature. Texan Juan N. Seguín reveals, in his memoirs of the years 1834-1842, an ambiguity like that of Bruce-Novoa's first Chicano, Cabeza de Vaca. Seguín is, as it were, a man without a country. After fighting against Santa Ana with Houston, he holds office in the U.S. and is eventually repudiated. He then seeks refuge in Mexico where he despises the people, and is eventually driven by necessity back to the U.S.

The territorial literature, from 1848 to 1912, reflects the theme of social protest and of the disillusionment of the new North Americans. They lose their land and what trappings of authority the more educated among them have. Spanish language newspapers, principally Francisco A. Ramírez' *El Clamor Público*, continue to be a major depository of literature. Second generation Mexican Americans born in this country already begin to write in English. We begin to speak here of "a Mexican American literature" (Leal 83).

A notable event in our on-going work to recover the canon of Chicano literature, from this period in particular, is the recent discovery of the earliest Chicano novel found to date: *The Squatter and the Don*, written in 1885 by a woman, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, under the pseudonym C. Loyal, taking up the theme of the loss of the land.[8] The novel was reprinted by Arte Público Press in 1992.

In 1910, the epic Mexican revolution breaks out, and, by conservative estimate, about ten per cent of the Mexican population is pushed out of that country and pulled into the U.S. by jobs that develop as the farmlands of the west open up with the advent of the refrigerator car and the dams of the Land Reclamation act. There is a cultural renaissance enriched by the immigration of Mexican intellectuals and artists, including dramatists, into the U.S.[9] Immigrant Mexican writers in the U.S. oppose assimilation and are critical of Pre-Chicano writers who are creating a wealth of neologisms; some already beginning to write in both languages, even simultaneously.

In his *Crónicas Diabólicas (1916-26)*, Julio G. Arce, writing under the pen name of Jorge Ulica (1870-1926) lets us know that he is not amused by what he sees as laughable pretentious attempts of some Mexicans to be "jaiton [high tone]" by mixing the languages. For example, the widow la Sra. Pellejón (literally, Mrs. Thickskinned) writes to him (11 de octubre, 1924):

> Le mando ésta por "espécial de liver." Quiero "reportarle" que voy a cambiar mi "second neim" que no suena "very güel" por su "translécion" en "ingles." En vez de Pellejón voy a "nominarme" Skinejón, que es casi "di seim." Así, mi difunto, a quien Dios tenga en el "jiven," no cogerá "truble" ni se pondrá "yelous."
>
> [Signed] Eulalia Skinejon (Ulica 155)

During this time, there are outstanding examples of those writing in English, such as the New Mexican poet Vicente J. Bernal. Another is María Cristina Mena Chambers, who comes to the U.S. as a fourteen-year-old; later she will publish short fiction and novels under her husband's name, Henry K. Chambers. She is a counter voice to the debasing stereotype of Mexico and Mexicans prevalent among

North Americans.[10] Notable too is Josefina Niggli, who leaves Monterrey, Mexico for Immaculate Heart College in San Antonio and later for Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Writing in English, her poems, plays and novels are landmarks of American Pre-Chicano literature. Her "narrative technique," Leal suggests, anticipates traits of the work of our contemporaries José Antonio Villareal and the late Tomás Rivera, in the framing of her stories and in the use of language ("Pre-Chicano" 80).

The '40s are dominated by writing in English and by the histories, prose, and poetry of Fray Angélico Chávez (Morales, née Morgan, *Fray Angélico*), and the stories of the barrio of Mario Suárez, much as Jovita González had done in the '30s. The Second World War and the anti-Mexican race riots of June 1943 (the so-called Zoot-Suit Riots) of American servicemen against the Mexican community awaken many to the realities of a racism of which they have been in denial. (The recent Rodney King and O. J. Simpson trials are comparable in this regard.) By the end of the '40s, the stage is set for the antecedents of the Chicano movement.

Still, in the '50s, our literature remains an in-house phenomenon, ignored by the mainstream. With the passing of the influence of the first generations of Mexican origin here in the U.S., questions arise concerning acculturation for acceptance, or the creation of a self-identity as a community, with an identifiable literature that reflects our historical experience of exclusion, exploitation, and ambiguity in this country. José Antonio Villareal's *Pocho*, published by Anchor (1959), portrays young Richard Rubio as an American wrestling with the complexities of the cultures within himself and the milieu in which he is embedded.[11] Lomelí highlights the publication of the critical work of José T. López, Edgardo Núñez, and Roberto Lara Vialpando, Breve reseña de la literatura hispana de Nuevo México y Colorado (*Brief Review of Hispanic Literature of New Mexico and Colorado*) as a notable statement asserting and documenting the existence of an remarkable corpus of distinctive writing--"una literatura yanqui en lengua castellana [a Yankee Literature in the Spanish language]" (qtd. in Lomelí, "Contemporary" 88)--that was ongoing in this country, yet largely ignored.

As I move on to address the second major component of the chronology of Chicano literature, namely, the evolution of contemporary Chicano literature, I call to your attention four important ideological and philosophical matrices of Chicano literature from about 1965 (the beginning of César Chávez's grape boycott) to the present. These cardinal emphases are (1) cultural nationalism, (2) Marxist Leninist historicism, (3) a concern with myth and archetype, and finally (4) post-modernism.[12] The struggles among these stances reflect the socio-political, intellectual, and spiritual struggle of and for the soul of the Chicano. My approach roughly parallels the breakdown of Lomelí's periods from 1959 to 1990.

The '60s is a period of uprising, described by Lomelí as the "breaking of social barriers." The confluence of the on-going Black Civil Rights Movement, of the struggle led by César Chávez and the United Farm Workers to form a union, and of the anti-Vietnam War protests, are paralleled in Chicano literature by "Cultural Nationalism as a Literary Impulse" (Lomelí, "Contemporary" 91). Self-determination and self-identity are central to our writing and analysis. Our first impulse is that of recovery and affirmation. As happened with women, we too had been told, as I have noted, that we were culturally deprived, that we had no literature.[13] But if distinguishing marks of being human are freedom and the ability to generate and inflesh a word, then . . . ? Presumably, we were better off with some form of paternalistic governance, without political, academic, or artistic voice.

In our rebellion against this human nihilation, we turned to the history and symbols of our indigenous roots and of the Mexican War of Independence and of the Revolution of 1910. (I believe many Mexicans were bemused, perhaps amused by our going back to the history and symbols of what has transpired at the beginning of this century in México.) Cordelia Candelaria has identified the following "primary thematic oppositions" as characteristic of the poetry of this period:

Raza	vs.	universalism
México and Aztlán	vs.	the United States
Equity and justice	vs.	racism
Tradition and communalism	vs.	capitalism
Holism and pre-Americanism	vs.	Euro-Western worldview (40).

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales' epic poem "I Am Joaquín," is the signature voice of this time. It concludes:

I am the masses of my people and
I refuse to be absorbed.
I am Joaquín
The odds are great
but my spirit is strong
My faith is unbreakable
My blood is pure
I am Aztec Prince and Christian Christ
I SHALL ENDURE!
I WILL ENDURE!

There is the rage of our late lamented Ricardo Sánchez, Ph.D. and ex-offender:

i linger
viewing mine prison [sic].

inside I hear me chanting
canto y grito mi liberación
y lloro mis desmadrazgos . . . (157)

[I sing and scream my freedom / and I cry out my loss and pain . . .]

In 1969, at Corky Gonzales's Youth Conference in Denver, Alurista (Alberto Baltazar Urista) the godfather of Chicano poetry, proclaims his Plan Espiritual de Aztlán--introducing the archetype of Aztlán as a functional metaphor to unify the people. He also opens the door to contemporary code-switching, sometimes called bilingual or inter-lingual writing, which Philip Ortego calls a binary phenomenon, (qtd. in Hinojosa 54), and which Tino Villanueva (one of our finest and most polished poets whom I cannot recommend highly enough to you) calls bi-sensitive writing (xix). There is the lyric power of Alurista's classic "Mis ojos hinchados":

Mis ojos hinchados
flooded with lagrimas
de bronce
melting on the cheek bones
of my concern
razgos indígenas (sic)
the scars of history on my face
and the veins of my body
that aches
vomito sangre

y lloro libertad
I do not ask for freedom
I *am* freedom

In the '70s, moved by the Marxist Leninist concern for the oppressed peoples of the world and those exploited in the internal colonial ghettos of the First World, many influential Chicano academics favor a historicist critical analysis of our writers. The ideological voice asserts itself (Lomelí, "Contemporary" 95-97), sometimes censuring, even censoring. A strong sense of commitment to social justice and of opposition to the historic exploitation of the raza, of the working class, develops a trend toward a qualitative univocal polarization of criteria for interpreting our writers with the Procrustean measures of historicism for whom there are absolutely no spiritual absolutes, and, apparently, no alternatives besides historicism. The epistemological warrant is that there is only matter: contingent, singular, irreplicable, and, therefore, incomprehensible. There is no room here for myth, transcendence, purpose, anagogy, or spirit. Because matter is the principle of individuation and the least common denominator, no generalization or meaning is possible.

Here we arrive at some kind of reductive minimalism which renders experience to a series of singular incidents and images perceived through electro-chemical impulses. We are limited to the passing *thisness*, there being no comprehensible *whatness*. Locked into XVIth Century sterotypes of the church, and unaware of, or minimalizing the importance of emerging theologies of liberation in the churches, religion is ignored or attacked as a reactionary institution sharing responsibility for the historical oppression and exploitation of the masses.

At the same time there is a rich anomaly found at the very beginning of the flowering of the contemporary Chicano novel: Strong archetypal elements appear in the work of Rivera and Anaya in the early '70s, when the first prestigious Quinto Sol Prizes are awarded--to Tomás Rivera in 1970 for his classic *". . . y no se lo tragó la tierra/ . . . and the Earth Did not Part"*; to Rudolfo A. Anaya in 1971 for his *Bless Me, Ultima*.[14] The social responsibility of the writer is hotly debated, and Anaya's concern for archetype in myth and dream is repeatedly and acerbically attacked.

Tierra lends itself to an analysis of class struggle; hence, it has not been criticized for its strong archetypal structural elements.[15] Rivera's novel is rightfully and universally acknowledged as the seminal work of the modern Chicano novel. It is not a story of search for identity, nor is it a theological statement. It is itself a powerful affirmative act of self-definition.

A nameless youth goes out one starry night to look for the devil.

> "Let's see, how do I call out to him? . . . Do I simply say 'devil?' 'Chamuco?' 'Lucifer?' 'Satan? . . . whatever comes to mind first."
>
> . . . He used every cuss word he knew and in varying tones of voice. He even cursed the devil's mother. But nothing happened. Absolutely nothing appeared and absolutely nothing changed.

The boy thinks: "But if there is no devil, then there is no . . . No, I'd better not say it." He then reflects: "Those who summoned the devil and later went insane did not do so because they had seen the devil. On the contrary, it was because the devil had not appeared" (62-63).

Taking a Jobian stance, the boy challenges the authority of God himself. In this daring use of hyperbole, Rivera comprehends us in the young boy's epiphanic leap in his search for his/our humanity. In the closing frame of the novel, like some universal archetype, the young man achieves comprehensive

inflection. He becomes thought thinking itself--a verbum. Seeing infinite possibilities, he becomes freedom; he discovers his humanity.

If, in José Antonio Villareal's precursor novel *Pocho*, young Richard Rubio is fragmented and isolated by his individuality, Rivera's young man creates his personhood and himself out of his intellectual and spiritual point of departure (176). This is further adumbrated toward the middle of the novel, when, after his First Holy Communion, the boy climbs a tree (presumably of knowledge) in a rocky and desert place--earlier that morning, he has accidentally seen a naked couple having sex on the floor of a dry cleaning establishment next to the church. At the end of the novel, after he discovers that he is free, that he is a man, not *un pinche buey* [not a simple beast], he climbs the Tree of Life in his own backyard.

On the other hand, the well known novels of Anaya, especially *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Tortuga*, are criticized *ad nauseam* for their strong mythical character;[16] but it is precisely this that draws us to him. He calls into question our traditional Catholic beliefs; and through the mediation of shamans, he continues searching for that something more than spirit in harmony with nature. He insists that we ask ourselves if there is not something beyond the singular, the material. Upon what does this something more rest? Juan Bruce-Novoa takes us to the heart of the matter in his analysis of *Tortuga*, where we find young people hospitalized, and confronted with suffering and evil. Bruce-Novoa notes that here, for Anaya, things do not happen by chance:

> Anaya's belief in essentialistic truth and transcendent order demands a different type of hero, one who, while passing through the questioning phase when necessary for the communal good, eventually transcends it in order to lead the community into a higher realm of existence, one in which the essential, transcendent order of being can be recognized and followed in daily life. (193)

This order has its origin in intelligence, with its implications of personhood and spirit. Perhaps Anaya is moving us toward a pantheistic unity, in some form of telluric, human, and sacred synergy. Assuming a post-modern stance, Anaya clearly sees himself missioned as a writer to tell the truth to the people as he sees it, even though he may have to walk alone, as the boy storyteller of his important short story "The Place of the Swallows" (*Silence* 54).[17]

Returning now to the dialectic between our writers and critics, one of our notable critics, Ramón Saldívar, in his study *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference*, is correct in his insistence that Chicano narrative does not simply re-present the world. Being "predominantly critical and ideological," he adds, its task is "to deflect, deform, and thus transform reality by revealing the dialectical structures that form the base of human experience." The emphasis, he tells us, is on the dialectics rather than on the knowledge of experience, thus allowing "the word to free itself from the enslaving myth of absolute and universal truths" (6-8).[18]

Saldívar, accepting Héctor Calderón's reading of Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*, as a romance,[19] is understandably uncomfortable with the novel's lack of

> confrontational resistance in favor of a romantic, mystical celebration of a racial collective unconscious unity with the world spirit. . . .
>
> . . . Antonio looks not to history, but to myth, magic, ritual, and symbol as the source of the stuff of life and as the contexts of his growth to artistic maturity. Such anyway, is apparently what the novel *Bless Me, Ultima* seems to offer. (103-05)

José Monleón notes that, "if our point of departure is historicism and social evolution, then an adherence to the mythic is indeed a political posture, an ideological affirmation which mystifies reality" (440).[20] And Cordelia Candelaria finds myth more proper to a pre-industrial culture ("Problems").[21] At that time I asked myself: If one is not Marxist, historicist, or post-modern, is one, then, not one of the club? Can there be such a thing as a Christian intellectual, or is this an oxymoron?

Other major authors of this period yet to be discover by traditional "American" literature, include Oscar Z[eta] Acosta and others; most notable among these are Miguel Méndez-M. and Ernesto Galarza.

Lomelí identifies a major group of writers in the late '70s, as The Isolated Generation of 1975. They are characterized by moving in disparate and innovative ways beyond the overt polemical, familiar Chicano characters and communal themes of some of their earlier contemporaries. They distinguish themselves by their openness to experimental movements in Latin America. Often their textuality is unapologetically mainstream, and they excel in exploring the inner complexities of character. Here, among the novelists, we will find Alejandro Morales, who begins to publish out of Mexico (*Caras Viejas y vino nuevo*; Joaquín Mortiz, 1975) describing the hard-core barrio with a shocking meta-naturalism which Lomelí calls "tremendismo" ("Contemporary" 98). [This aptly describes the shocking realism of the work of one of our most talented young writers making his mark today, Luis Alberto Urrea (see *Across the Wire: Life and Hard Times on the Mexican Border*).] Another important member of this isolated generation is Ron Arias, whose novel The *Road to Tamazunchale* that has yet to be analyzed for the significance of its mythical and archetypal structure. Among this group we must also include Aristeo Brito and Nash Candelaria.

Among the poets, if Gary Soto begins to stand out, special note should be made of Bernice Zamora, sometimes richly textured, for example, by the best of Robinson Jeffers (Candelaria, *Chicano*, 148-51). As Lomelí aptly puts it, "This group of writers . . . demonstrated their willingness to conditionally assimilate outside influences but which were basically rooted in American poetic discourse and referents" ("Contemporary" 100). Here we also include the versatile and talented Ana Castillo (see her 1994 release, *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*), Angela de Hoyos, Lorna Dee Cervantes, and Jimmy Santiago Baca. I call Alma Luz Villanueva to your attention, for her especially sensitive complex feminist anagogical sense of continuity with nature.

Though most of these authors continue to write into the '80s, this period, expanding into the contemporary period, Lomelí tells us, is characterized "by a wide decentralized span of individuals in their efforts to leave their mark--with the exception of women writers who consolidated an unparalleled generation and possibly a special interest group." New talent appears from every quarter, and I suggest that women to date are writing about seventy percent of our literature in almost every genre. "The shift" is inwards, Lomelí notes, "more one of utilizing technique to unveil a cross-sectional disclosure of multi-faceted experiences covering gender, class, psychological and social determinants" ("Contemporary" 102).

The impact of academe, academics, and a more sophisticated audience dominate the field of Chicano literature; they set the stage for a new internationalism and a post-modern sense of questioning human truth and values. Though Europeans had taken a keen interest in our literature long before North Americans, this trend is accelerated by a series of biennial conferences, which continue to this day, organized by Juan Bruce-Novoa and others, beginning with the First International Symposium on Chicano Culture, July 5-7, 1984, in Mainz. The Mexican colonial town of Taxco, in the state of Guerrero, has been announced as the site for the forthcoming August 7-11, 1996, Seventh International Conference on Latino Cultures in the United States: "The Umbilical Myth: The Latinos in North America." Here in the United States, a host of critical and bio-biographical works of the highest academic quality begins to pour forth;

though, as Leal has repeatedly pointed out,[22] we are still lacking a professional journal of the first rank, focused on Chicana/Chicano literary criticism.

Lomelí organizes into three groups the host of talented Chicana and Chicano writers who continue to "give expression to the universal through the regional" (Leal, "Problem of Identifying" 4). They are characterized as transitional and experimental; as producing "a solidly mature corpus of works after 1985"; or, finally, among those who produce a sustained body of work, some from as early as the '70s ("Contemporary" 102). Among this latter group, I would prominently include Rudolfo A. Anaya who continues to experiment with a variety of genre, and who has given particular impetus to the essay. A review of the bibliographies that will be presented to you will include notable authors in each of these categories. I especially call to your attention Bernice Zamora, Lucha Corpi (including her recent mystery novels), Leo Romero, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Helen María Viramontes (*The Moths, Under the Feet of Jesus*).

Meriting special attention too, in my estimation, are the two novels of the late Arturo Islas: *The Rain God*, and *Migrant Souls*. I believe that they are among our most important contemporary works dealing with the Chicano novel as a post-modern metaphor of our evolving beliefs and values.

If for the post-modernists, there is no center and foundation, no signifieds, only infinitely receding mirrored signifiers, then ethic is lost in an epistemology gone awry without any possibility of a metaphysics. Given these voids, Salman Rushdie can then presume to say that *the novel* is "the crucial art" of . . . the post-modern age (107). Since

> all that is solid *has* melted into the air . . . reality and morality are not givens but imperfect constructs, . . . [this] is the point from which fiction begins. This is what J.-F Lyotard called, in 1979, *La Condition Postmoderne*. The challenge of literature is to start from this point and still find a way of fulfilling our unaltered spiritual requirements. (105)

Be this as it may; I believe, however, that it is naive and presumptuous of novelists to believe that they are missioned to save us from the abyss of relativism and nihilism that seems to be the vogue.[23] I hardly look to any novelist anywhere for a new philosophical/theological center of meaning.

Ending on a more pragmatic note, I suggest among some works that I have found successful with the broad cross-section of our community college students, aside from *The Rudolfo Anaya Reader* (Warner), the following very partial list: (1) Luis Alberto Urrea, *Across the Wire: Life and Hard Times on the Mexican Border* (essays), mentioned above; and his wonderful must novel *In Search of Snow*; (2) Alberto Rios, *Pig Cookies and Other Stories*; (3) Benjamin Alaire Sáenz, *Carry Me Like Water* (novel), *Dark and Perfect Angels* (poetry); (4) Alma Villanueva, *The Ultraviolet Sky* (a novel), and her *Weeping Woman: La Llorona and Other Stories*; (5) José Antonio Burciaga, *Drink Cultura* (essays); (6) Ray González, *Memory Fever* (essays); (7) Tino Villanueva, *Scene from the Movie Giant*; (8) Leroy V. Quintana's powerful, sustained poetic voice, most recently in his *The History of Home* (I understand that he may surprise us with a novel); (9) finally, a notable new collection of women's essays, *Latina: Women's Voices from the Borderlands*, edited by Lillian Castillo-Speed. And there are many others. Our writers will continue to place before the world our humanity revealed through the ritual of our distinctly Chicano cultural regional experience. A theme for another study is what I see as an irreversible move toward a more inclusive Chicano Latino literature and Chicano Latino Studies.

This overview of Chicano literature reveals the rich complexity of voices that go to make up our writers and critics. I hope that it has served to dispell something of the frustrating steroptypical expectations of a limited barrio/ethnic voice that passes for token Chicana/Chicano multiculturalism.

Notes

1. See Soustelle, endnote four, chapter one, p. 252: "Father Antonio del Rincón, *Arte Mexicana* (Mexico 1595). Reprinted by A. Peñafiel (Mexico 1885). P. 81 '*Mexicco (sic): Ciudad de México, i.e. en medio de la luna*'."

2. See *Luis Leal: A Bibliography with Interpretative and Critical Essays*, ed. Salvador Güereña, and Raquel Quiroz González (Berkeley: U of California at Berkeley, Chicano Studies Library Publications Unit, 1988).

3. See Luis Leal, "The Problem of Identifying Chicano Literature," *The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature*, ed. Francisco Jiménez (New York: Bilingual, 1979) 2-6

4. See also Rudolfo A. Anaya, "The New World Man," *Before Columbus Review* 1.2-3 (1989): 3-4.

5. Earlier works by these authors include the following: Luis Leal, "Mexican American Literature: A Historical Perspective," *Modern Chicano Writers: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Joseph Sommers and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1979) 18-30. See Luis Leal and Pepe Barrón, "Chicano Literature: An Overview," *Three American Literatures: Essays in Chicano, Native American, and Asian-American Literature for Teachers of American Literature*, ed. Houston A. Baker, Jr. (New York: MLA, 1982) 9-31. Also see Francisco A. Lomelí, "An Overview of Chicano Letters: From Origins to Resurgence," *Chicano Studies: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Eugene E. García, Francisco A. Lomelí, and Isidro D. Ortiz (New York: Teachers College, 1983) 103-19.

6. Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, XI Congreso; Friday, 28 August 1992. Panel on Chicano Literature: Alejandro Morales, Chair; participants also included Alfonso Rodríguez, U of Northern Colorado, and César A. González-T., San Diego Mesa College.

7. *Pocho*: a term coined by José Vasconcelos in his essay "Asoma el pochismo"(qtd. in Leal, "Pre-Chicano Literature" 76). See José Vasconcelos, "Asoma el pochismo," *La Tormenta*, Obras I (Mexico: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957).

8. "[María Cristina] Mena [Chambers] escribió y publicó varias novelas pero no fue hasta después de 1915. Quien sí publica una novela en 1885 (en inglés también, como Mena) fue María Amparo Ruiz Burton, bajo el seudónimo C. Loyal. Se titula *The Squatter and the Don*." Letter of Don Luis Leal to César A. González-T., 5 October 1992.

In his study "Chicano Literature: A Discourse of Difference," presented at San Diego Mesa College, San Diego, California, on 7 November 1991, Don Luis commented:

> For many years, I have been saying in my articles . . . that the novel in English does not appear until the 20th Century. But recently a novel has been discovered [by person or persons unknown], published [in San Francisco] in 1885 by a woman [who lived] here in San Diego--[a novel] about the problems of the Californios losing their land to the Anglo-Americans. So we have to revise our history, . . . not only the social history, but also the history of the literature of the people. This novel was written by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, and it is called *The Squatter and the Don*, published in 1885. And she has another novel, two novels. . . .
>
> This trend to write in English continues with another woman writer, until recently unknown, María Cristina Mena, who in 1913 began to write short stories in the periodicals

> in New York and wrote several novels about Mexico. But why wasn't she known? Because she used her husband's name--Chambers. And nobody knew that she was a pre-Chicana writer. . . . The same thing with Josephina Niggli's novel, *Mexican Village*, published in 1945.*

* Videotape, rec. 7 Nov. 1991, San Diego Mesa College; San Diego, CA, Chicano Studies Dept. and Independent Learning Center.

In a subsequent telephone conversation from Stanford University, Leal made some clarifications and added, "Rosaura Sánchez has the novel [*The Squatter and the Don*] and is preparing an introduction." [The novel, as already noted, was published by Arte Público Press in 1992.] Leal further remarked, "Lauro Flores, of Washington State University is also doing a study on this work. He read a paper on this novel at Stanford University about two years ago. That videotape of Lauro's presentation is at Stanford. Guillermo Hernández also mentions that novel in his book *Chicano Satire* [(Austin: U of Texas P, 1991) 8]." In her novel Burton reveals the loss of power and privileged status by the Spanish-speaking elite after the American invasion, and she gives voice to significant important events surrounding California life.

9. See James D. Cockcroft, *Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution: 1900-1913*, (Austin: U of Texas P, 1968).

10. See endnote number eight above. Also see Cecil Robinson, *With the Ears of Strangers: The Mexican in American Literature* (Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1963). See also Robinson's revision of this earlier work in his *Mexico and the Hispanic Southwest in American Literature* (Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1977).

11. See Roberto Cantú, "José Antonio Villarreal (1924-)," *Chicano Literature: A Reference Guide*, ed. Julio A. Martínez and Francisco A. Lomelí (Westport: Greenwood, 1985) 420-32.

12. See Rosaura Sánchez's study "Postmodernism and Chicano Literature," *Aztlán* 18.2 (1987): 1-14.

13. I recall remarks by Tomás Rivera concerning literature and culture, made at the University of California in San Diego, in the early '70s. He noted: When someone tells me that they have a culture, I immediately ask where is your literature? If you have no literature, you have no culture. So if we Chicanos say that we have a culture, we must produce our literature.

14. In 1972 this prestigious prize will be awarded both to Rolando Hinojosa-Smith for his *Estampas del Valle*, and to Estela Portillo-Trambley for *Rain of Scorpions and Other Writings*.

15. See César A. González-T., "Archetypes of Integration in Chicano Literature: Tomás Rivera's *Tierra*," *Confluencia* 5.1 (1989): 85-90.

16. See Ernesto Padilla, "*Tortuga*: The Black Sun of Solomón's Wards," *Rudolfo A. Anaya: Focus on Criticism*, ed. César A. González-T. (La Jolla: Lalo, 1990) 232-53.

17. See Luis Leal's article in *Rudolfo A. Anaya: Focus on Criticism*: "Voices in the Wind: Anaya's Short Fiction" (La Jolla: Lalo, 1990) 335-48.

18. In such an epistemology, truth *is* not; it is a happening. Such an analysis is seen as appropriate, given the assumed dominance of "sociopolitical themes" as epistemic; hence, its tendency to challenge and deconstruct even as it moves "toward the production of meaning," (Saldivar 7)--which, I assume is not to be interpreted as a creation of an absolute truth. This was anathema to Nietzsche (*On the Genealogy of Morals*),

Saldívar notes, as an "institutionalized expression of a will to power." It was also Nietzsche who announced the death of God, and who, logically, concerned himself with the search for a new basis for human values.

19. See Héctor Calderón, "Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*. A Chicano Romance of the Southwest," *Rudolfo A. Anaya: Focus on Criticism*, ed. César A. González-T. (La Jolla: Lalo, 1990) 64-99. In this same anthology, Roberto Cantú criticizes Calderón's reading of *Ultima* as a romance and as a "flight from history." See endnote nine, p. 56, of Cantú's study "Apocalypse as an Ideological Construct: The Storyteller's Art in *Bless Me, Ultima*," 12-63.

20. "Si creemos en el mito como una realidad objetiva y no como una proyección ideológica, no queda más remedio que aceptar, en última instancia, la inmovilidad o la condición cíclica del paso del tiempo. Porque, ¿no es acaso lo mítico esa esencia 'vertical', permanente por los siglos de los siglos? De ser así, poco o nada nuevo se habría dicho desde los clásicos. Por el contrario, si se toma como referencia de juicio la historicidad y la evolución social, la adherencia a lo mítico no pasa de ser una postura política, una afirmación ideológica que mixtifica la realidad" (440).

In a paper read by Juan Bruce-Novoa at the XI Congress of the Asociación internacional de Hispanistas, which met at the University of California at Irvine, between 24-29 August 1992, Bruce-Novoa took Ramón Saldívar to task for forcing, indeed misrepresenting, the text of José Antonio Villareal's *Pocho*. Saldivar tells us, in his analysis of *Pocho*, that Juan Rubio's son, Richard, was born in a melon field, hence the son of agricultural workers in a context of conflict with forces that exploit the workers (Saldívar 61). In fact, Villareal repeatedly tells us that Richard was born in a river: "It was near Brawley, in the Imperial Valley, at a place where a dry creek met a tributary of the canal del Alamo, that Richard was born. . . . It was here, then, near Brawley one night after she had fed her family that Consuelo Rubio felt the urge to urinate. . . . She reached a sandy stretch and walked on, and was dangerously near the bank of the canal. . . . there on the soft sand she dropped her child" (29-30). The river, Bruce-Novoa added, is the classic place of the *pícaro*, the place of ambiguity. As I noted earlier, when speaking of Cabeza de Vaca as the first Chicano, Bruce-Novoa calls "ambiguity, the essence of *Chicanismo*" (Leal, "Pre-Chicano Literature" 64).

21. See César A. González-T., "Los Scholarships I," "Los Scholarships II," *New Chicana/Chicano Writing, I*, ed. Charles M. Tatum (Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1992) 116-18.

22. Don Luis made a formal call for such a professional journal in the course of his acceptance speech of the 1987 Distinguished Scholar Award by the National Association for Chicano Studies (NACS), at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 1988. On 22 April 1995, on the occasion of the establishment of the Luis Leal Endowed Chair in Chicano Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara, I asked Don Luis if there was any move yet to establish such a journal. His response was, "Unfortunately, no."

23. Hence, Rushdie tells us, "Carlos Fuentes has called the novel 'a privileged arena,'" . . . and poses a question that [he, Rushdie] says,

> I have been asking myself all my life as a writer:
> *Can the religious mentality survive outside of religious dogma and hierarchy?* Which is to say:
> Can art be the third principle that mediates between the material and spiritual worlds; might it, by "swallowing" both worlds, offer us something new--something that might even be called a secular definition of transcendence?

He answers: " I believe it can. I believe it must. And I believe that, at its best, it does" (103).

Behold a new Messiah! A new Incarnation, *et verbum caro factum est*! The novel is the new bridge, the *pons* between matter and spirit; and the novelist is the new pontifex.

Our traditions tell us that there is something greater than us, a truth greater even than the truth of Hannah Arendt's common world--a genus in being, goodness, truth, and beauty, in virtue of which all participated human creations are possible. The Nahuatl called it the certain center and foundation, without which all contingent creations were not possible. Ometéotl as Tloque Nahuaque, is

> he who has everything in himself. . . . supports the earth (tlallamanac) at its navel or center. . . . [He the] one who is the very being of all things, preserving and sustaining them. . . . And being of him, everything is produced by his generative action (Lord and Lady of duality), which endlessly gives truth or foundation to all that exists. (León-Portilla 93)

We must be open, and we must be more inclusive of the old voices and of the new. Perhaps it is time to begin to listen to new young scholars such as Allan Figueroa Deck, who tells us in the second issue of the new *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*, that "religion is a particularly relevant and disclosive aspect of Latino identity" (53). Perhaps, as Ghandi told us, we are finding out that we will have to hurry up to catch up with the people we are leading.

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